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UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCES AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

The first of two special sessions of the General Assembly scheduled for 1990 has just concluded, focusing on international action to tackle the problem of drug abuse and illicit trafficking. The Assembly's second special session of the year -- in April -- will be devoted to international economic co-operation, in particular the revitalization of economic growth and development in the developing countries.

Two disarmament-related conferences are scheduled during the year -- one, a Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, to be held in August-September; the other, a two-part conference to amend the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water, scheduled for June 1990 and January 1991. A Conference on Least Developed Countries will take place in Paris in September. In addition, the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) will convene an international meeting in Geneva in November/December to review restrictive business practices. The Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders is set for August-September in Havana.

The year 1990 will see commemorative meetings of the Assembly to mark the tenth anniversary of the initiation of technical co-operation for development and the thirtieth anniversary of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples.

The Assembly has declared or proposed six new decades for the 1990s: the fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000), the third United Nations Disarmament Decade (the 1990s), the United Nations Decade of International Law (1990-1999), the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000), the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1990s) and the second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000).

The following pages contain information on United Nations conferences and special observances scheduled for 1990 and ensuing years, as well as various internationally recognized decades, years, weeks and days.

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DISARMAMENT

Third Disarmament Decade
(1990s)

On 7 December 1988, the General Assembly decided to declare the decade of the 1990s as the third United Nations Disarmament Decade. The Secretary-General was asked to seek the views of Member States and specialized agencies on possible elements to be included in a draft resolution, to be entitled "Declaration of the 1990s as the Third Disarmament Decade" (resolution 43/78 L). The Assembly has asked the Disarmament Commission to finalize this year its preparation of a draft declaration for adoption by the Assembly (resolution 44/119 H).

In December 1979, the General Assembly declared the 1980s to be the second Disarmament Decade (resolution 34/75), and a year later it approved a Declaration setting forth goals to be achieved and activities to be undertaken during the Decade (resolution 35/46).

In this Declaration, prepared at the Assembly's request by the Disarmament Commission, the Assembly noted that the first Disarmament Decade (the 1970s) had ended without the accomplishment of the objectives set for it and that, while some limited agreements had been reached, "effective measures relating to the cessation of the nuclear-arms race at an early date and to nuclear disarmament have continued to elude man's grasp".

The goals of the second Decade, according to the Declaration, were: halting and reversing the arms race, particularly the nuclear-arms race; concluding and implementing effective disarmament agreements that would contribute significantly to the achievement of general and complete disarmament under effective international control; developing on an equitable basis the limited results obtained in the disarmament field in the 1970s; strengthening international peace and security in accordance with the United Nations Charter; and making available a substantial part of the resources released by disarmament measures to promote attainment of the objectives of the third United Nations Development Decade (1981-1990).

Disarmament Week
(24-30 October)

The annual observance of Disarmament Week, which begins on the anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, was first called for in the Final Document of the General Assembly's 1978 special session on disarmament (resolution S-10/2). States were invited to expose the danger of the arms race, propagate the need for its cessation and increase public understanding of the urgent tasks of disarmament. Governmental and non-governmental organizations were invited to undertake annual activities to mark the Week. At the Assembly's request, the Secretary-General drew up in 1979 the elements of a model programme for the Week, which might assist States in developing their own observances.

Fourth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (20 August - 14 September 1990, Geneva)

The Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (Geneva, August/September 1985) proposed that a fourth conference be convened in 1990 to review the operation of the 1968 Treaty, which had entered into force on 5 March 1970 (resolution 43/82). At a Conference Preparatory Committee of States parties to the Treaty, held in May 1989, it was decided that the fourth Review Conference would take place in Geneva from 20 August to 14 September 1990.

Amendment Conference on the Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (4-8 June 1990 and 7-18 January 1991, New York)

On 15 December 1989, the Assembly took note of the procedure whereby an amendment to the 1963 Treaty Banning Nuclear Weapon Tests in the Atmosphere, in Outer Space and under Water (also known as the Partial Test-Ban Treaty) may be considered by a conference convened for that purpose (resolution 44/106). The submission of a proposal by non-nuclear-weapon States parties to consider amendments that would convert the Treaty into a comprehensive nuclear-test-ban treaty had earlier been welcomed by the Assembly (resolution 43/63 B). A preparatory committee open to all States parties to the Treaty is to hold a series of organizational meetings in New York from 29 May to 1 June. A one-week session of the Conference is scheduled for 4 to 8 June, followed by a second substantive session, from 7 to 18 January 1991.

Third Review Conference of the Parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (1991, Geneva)

On 15 December 1989, the General Assembly took note of the decision made by the second Review Conference on the 1971 bacteriological weapons Convention (Geneva, September 1986) that the third Review Conference should be held at Geneva no later than 1991, at a time to be agreed upon by States parties to the Convention. The Secretary-General was asked to circulate to the States parties a report on the implementation of confidence-building measures agreed upon by the Ad Hoc Meeting of Scientific and Technical Experts (resolution 44/115 C).

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OUTER SPACE

International Space Year (1992)

On 8 December 1989, the Assembly endorsed the initiative of international scientific organizations and bodies to designate 1992 as International Space Year, during which international co-operation should be promoted and carried out for the benefit and in the interests of all States, taking into particular account the needs of the developing countries (resolution 44/56).

QUESTION OF PALESTINE

International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (4 June)

On 19 August 1982, at its emergency special session on the question of Palestine, the General Assembly, "appalled at the great number of innocent Palestinian and Lebanese children victims of Israel's acts of aggression", decided to commemorate 4 June of each year as the International Day of Innocent Children Victims of Aggression (resolution ES-7/8).

International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (29 November)

By a resolution adopted in December 1977, the General Assembly called for the annual observance, beginning in 1978, of the date 29 November as the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People (resolution 32/40 B).

SOUTHERN AFRICA

Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Namibia and All Other Colonial Territories, as well as those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights (Beginning on 25 May)

In 1972, the General Assembly appealed to the Governments and the peoples of the world to observe annually, beginning on 25 May (Africa Liberation Day), a Week of Solidarity with the Colonial Peoples of Southern Africa Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Equal Rights (resolution 2911 (XXVII)).

In a decision adopted in November 1982, the Assembly, on the recommendation of the Special Committee against Apartheid, the United Nations Council for Namibia and the Special Committee on decolonization, changed the title to "Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Namibia and All Other Colonial Territories, as well as those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights" (decision 37/421).

International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa (16 June)

In November 1976, the General Assembly proclaimed 16 June, the anniversary of the start of the 1976 uprising in Soweto and other areas, as the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggling People of South Africa, and called for its observance annually (resolution 31/6 I).

International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia (9 August)

In December 1981, the General Assembly called for the annual observance of 9 August as the International Day of Solidarity with the Struggle of Women in South Africa and Namibia, and it appealed to all Governments and organizations "to provide generous contributions to the projects of the national liberation movements and front-line States for assistance to refugee women and children from South Africa" (resolution 36/172 K).

Namibia Day (26 August)

The General Assembly decided in December 1973 to observe 26 August each year as Namibia Day to mark the start, in 1966, of the Namibian liberation struggle (resolution 3111 (XXVIII)).

Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners (11 October)

Observance of 11 October as a Day of Solidarity with South African Political Prisoners was proclaimed by the General Assembly in November 1976 in a resolution demanding "the immediate and unconditional release of all persons imprisoned or restricted for their involvement in the struggle for liberation in South Africa" (resolution 31/6 C).

Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and Their Liberation Movement, SWAPO (Week of 27 October)

On the proposal of the President of Senegal at the International Conference on Namibia and Human Rights, held in Dakar in January 1976, the General Assembly decided to observe annually the week of 27 October as the Week of Solidarity with the People of Namibia and Their Liberation Movement, the South West Africa People's Organization (SWAPO) (resolution 31/150).

DEVELOPMENT

Fourth United Nations Development Decade (1991-2000)

In December 1987, the Secretary-General, in consultation with United Nations organizations, was asked to provide information appropriate for the preparation of an international development strategy for a fourth United Nations development decade (1991-2000) (resolution 42/193). The following year, the Assembly decided to establish an ad hoc committee of the whole to prepare such a strategy for a fourth development decade, with a view to finalizing it for adoption in 1990 (resolution 43/182). Some of the proposed elements of this strategy, which were outlined at the 1989 session of the Assembly, include reactivation and acceleration of broad durable economic growth and development, including external debt, international trade and commodities, technology, industrial policies, and food and agricultural policies; eradication of poverty and hunger; population; environment; human resources and institutional development; requirements and problems of the least developed countries; and development financing (resolution 44/169).

During the first Development Decade (the 1960s), the Assembly had called on Member States to unite in a sustained effort to break the cycle of poverty, hunger, ignorance and disease which afflicts much of the world's population. Progress was made in a number of countries, but gains were offset by growing populations, unfavourable trade patterns and heavy debt burdens.

The need for a world plan to overcome the problems was recognized during the 1960s and, in 1970, the Assembly approved the International Development Strategy for the second Development Decade (the 1970s) which set forth targets for progress and expressed the commitment of Member States to carry out specific measures so that the goals could be attained (resolution 2626 (XXV)). Reviewing progress in 1979, the Committee for Development Planning concluded that, while developing countries as a whole were likely to achieve the annual growth-rate targets, the lowest-income developing countries fell far short of the goals; in general, developing countries remained highly vulnerable to external economic forces.

In proclaiming the third United Nations Development Decade, the Assembly adopted a new International Development Strategy calling for a "substantially greater effort in the 1980s" than was made during the previous Development Decade. It set a target of 0.7 per cent of the gross national product of all economically advanced countries as official development assistance to developing countries, to be achieved by 1985 if possible, but no later than in the second half of the Decade. The Assembly reaffirmed the 0.7 per cent target in 1988 (resolution 43/197).

The Strategy for the 1980s was an integral part of the efforts to establish a new international economic order whose aims were set out by the General Assembly on 1 May 1974, in the Declaration and Programme of Action on the Establishment of a New International Economic Order, adopted at the first of three special sessions of the Assembly on economic matters. Proclaimed at a time of growing world economic distress, the Declaration stated that the current international economic order was in direct conflict with current developments in international political and economic relations, and it stressed the severe repercussions of the crises in the world economy, especially on the developing countries. The Programme of Action outlines measures to be taken in regard to raw materials and commodities, world trade, industrialization, financing of development, monetary matters, control of transnational corporations, sovereignty over natural resources and special aid for the least developed countries.

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At the second special session on economic issues, held in September 1975, the Assembly approved a framework for concrete negotiations in trade, financing for development, food and agriculture, and other subjects (resolution 3362 (S-VII)), and, in December 1977, it affirmed that all global negotiations relating to the establishment of the new international economic order should take place within the framework of the United Nations system (resolution 32/174). Two years later, the Assembly expressed deep concern at the limited progress made in negotiations on international economic co-operation, and decided, therefore, to launch a round of sustained global negotiations at the third of its special sessions on economic matters, in August and September 1980 (resolution 34/138). That session, however, as well as the regular Assembly sessions that followed it, did not reach agreement on the procedures and agenda for the negotiations.

Since then, the Assembly has decided to keep open its agenda item on the launching of global negotiations in order to allow informal consultations to continue, and to reconvene at short notice to consider any decisions or agreements that might emerge from the negotiations.

At a resumption of its 1988 session, held in February-March 1989, the Assembly decided, on the recommendation of its Second Committee (Economic and Financial), that a special session on international economic co-operation should be held at Headquarters from 23 to 27 April 1990 (decision 43/460). The session is to review problems facing the world economy and consider priority issues, including the need for recovery and revitalization of economic growth and development of the developing countries, and could provide guidelines for an international development strategy for the 1990s. An intergovernmental preparatory committee of the whole was created to make all necessary preparations including drawing up a provisional agenda and drafting a final document. The Secretary-General was asked to submit to it a comprehensive report on the state of international economic co-operation.

Second United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices (26 November - 7 December 1990, Geneva)

The United Nations Conference on Restrictive Business Practices, held in 1979 and 1980, approved the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices. Five years after adoption of the Principles and Rules by the General Assembly, a Conference to review them was held (Geneva, November 1985).

Following consultations with regional groups and Governments on reconvening the Conference, the Assembly, on 5 December 1986, decided that the Second United Nations Conference to Review All Aspects of the Set of Multilaterally Agreed Equitable Principles and Rules for the Control of Restrictive Business Practices should be convened in 1990, under the auspices of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD). The UNCTAD Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Restrictive Business Practices is to serve as the preparatory body for the Conference (resolution 41/167), which is to be held in Geneva from 26 November to 7 December 1990.

Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (3-14 September 1990, Paris)

In 1985, the General Assembly decided to carry out in 1990 a global review and appraisal of the implementation of the Substantial New Programme of Action for the 1980s for the Least Developed Countries, launched by UNCTAD and adopted in Paris at the 1981 United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (resolution 40/205). Its aim was self-sustained development for those countries and minimum standards of nutrition, health, transport and communications, housing, education and job opportunities. At its seventh (1987) session, UNCTAD recommended that the review be conducted by a United Nations conference at a high level.

On 11 December 1987, the Assembly decided to convene a Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries to review progress at the country level and international support measures, particularly official development assistance, and to formulate and adopt policies and measures to accelerate the development process in the least developed countries during the 1990s. It accepted an offer by France to host the Conference in September 1990; the UNCTAD Secretary-General was designated as the Conference Secretary-General, UNCTAD as the focal point for preparations and UNCTAD's Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries as the Preparatory Committee (resolution 42/177).

Preparatory meetings include a Meeting of the Intergovernmental Group on the Least Developed Countries, at Geneva from 26 March to 6 April 1990.

United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (Eighth Session, 1991)

On 22 December 1989, the General Assembly took note of a decision of the UNCTAD Trade and Development Board on arrangements for the eighth session of UNCTAD to be held in 1991, including an agreement to hold consultations on its location in Latin America (resolution 44/219).

Second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1991-2000)

On 20 December 1988, the General Assembly declared the period 1991-2000 the second Transport and Communications Decade in Africa. At the same time, it endorsed a 1988 Economic and Social Council resolution noting a decision of the Conference of African Ministers of Transport, Communications and Planning of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) that the institutional arrangements for the first Decade (1978-1988) should be retained, with a two-year preparatory period between the end of the first Decade and the launching of the second. Those arrangements included the Conference of African Ministers serving as the permanent policy-making body, ECA as the lead agency for preparing the programme for the Decade and for co-ordinating and monitoring activities, and the Inter-Agency Co-ordinating Committee as the technical body accountable to the Conference of Ministers. The Assembly asked the Secretary-General, in consultation with the Organization of African Unity and African regional and subregional economic groups and United Nations agencies, to undertake the necessary preparatory arrangements (resolution 43/179).

The first Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (1978-1988) had been proclaimed by the Assembly in 1977 with a view to preparing and implementing a global strategy for the development of transport and communications in Africa in order to solve the problems of the continent in this field, and mobilizing the needed technical and financial resources (resolution 32/160).

An ECA report evaluating the first Decade concluded that the Decade had given a major boost to the future development of transport and communications by equipping Africa with a policy and strategy, as well as institutions and mechanisms for their implementation.

Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific (1985-1994)

Endorsing a recommendation of the Economic and Social Council, as proposed by the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), the General Assembly, in 1984, proclaimed the Transport and Communications Decade for Asia and the Pacific during the period 1985-1994 (resolution 39/227).

The objectives for the Decade are to:

-- Raise the transport and communications infrastructural facilities of developing ESCAP member countries to a level commensurate with their development objectives and priorities, giving particular attention to the special needs of the region's least developed, land-locked and island developing countries;

-- Identify systematically and comprehensively the region's transport and communications problems and work out solutions;

-- Promote a more effective and efficient transport and communications network comprising all modes and means in an integrated way, in particular for development of intra- and interregional linkages, as well as network maintenance and co-ordination, tariff setting and physical planning; and

-- Encourage co-ordination and co-operation in the transport and communications field in the region.

Support for the regional action programme was sought from Governments and international organizations, particularly the United Nations Development Programme.

Second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (1990s)

Upon the recommendation of the Industrial Development Board of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) and the UNIDO General Conference, the General Assembly, on 22 December 1989, proclaimed the period 1991-2000 the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa (resolution 44/237). The Secretary-General, in consultation with the Director-General of UNIDO, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), and other regional and United Nations bodies, was asked to undertake the necessary preparations for the Decade.

In December 1980, the Assembly, on the recommendation of UNIDO's Third General Conference, held earlier that year in New Delhi, had proclaimed the 1980s as the Industrial Development Decade for Africa, for the purpose of mobilizing greater political commitment to and financial and technical support for the industrialization of Africa. The Assembly called on UNIDO and ECA, in close co-operation with OAU, to formulate proposals to implement a programme for the Decade and to monitor its progress (resolution 35/66 B). Priority was to be accorded to the formulation of industrial policies, strategies and plans, the development of core industries, industrial manpower, technological capabilities and institutional infrastructure, the development of energy technology and equipment, the promotion of intra-African industrial co-operation, the development of the least developed countries, the mobilization of financial resources and the popularization of the Decade.

In June 1986, at its thirteenth special session, focusing on African development problems, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990. The continent committed itself to launch long-term programmes for self-sustaining socio-economic development and growth, as elaborated in Africa's Priority Programme for Economic Recovery 1986-1990, adopted by the OAU Assembly of Heads of State and Government in July 1985. The international community committed itself to assisting Africa to achieve this objective. Implementation of that Priority Programme was to contribute to the realization of the Industrial Development Decade for Africa as well as the Transport and Communications Decade in Africa (resolution S-13/2).

Africa Industrialization Day
(20 November)

On 22 December 1989, the General Assembly decided that, within the framework of the second Industrial Development Decade for Africa, 20 November would be designated as Africa Industrialization Day, for the purpose of mobilizing the commitment of the international community to the industrialization of the continent (resolution 44/237).

International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade
(1981-1990)

Following recommendations by the United Nations Water Conference (Mar del Plata, Argentina, March 1977) and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Vancouver, Canada, June 1976) that Governments adopt programmes to provide safe drinking water for all by 1990, the General Assembly, in 1980, proclaimed the period 1981-1990 as the International Drinking Water Supply and Sanitation Decade (resolution 35/18).

In the proclamation, the Assembly expressed concern that a large part of the world's population did not have reasonable access to safe and ample water supplies and that an even larger part was without adequate sanitation facilities. The Assembly called for a commitment by Member States to bring about a substantial improvement in the standards and levels of service in drinking water supply and sanitation by 1990.

In 1985, progress towards the attainment of the Decade's national and international goals at mid-point was reviewed. The report to the Assembly stated that although the Decade had already had a significant impact, most of the enormous task of providing water supply and sanitation services to the unserved still lay ahead.

The Assembly encouraged Governments to strengthen their capabilities for formulating policies and preparing, carrying out and monitoring programmes and projects; prepare and implement strategies to develop skilled human resources; improve the mobilization and use of funds; increase health education and community participation as well as linkages between health and water supply agencies; and enhance women's participation in the planning, operation and assessment of programmes and projects (resolution 40/171).

The Assembly asked for a report in 1990 on progress achieved and recommendations for follow-up action.

ENVIRONMENT

World Environment Day
(5 June)

The General Assembly has urged Governments and United Nations organizations to mark World Environment Day with activities reaffirming their concern for the preservation and enhancement of the environment. The date 5 June was chosen by the Assembly in 1972 to commemorate the anniversary of the opening day of the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm, 1972), which led to the establishment of the United Nations Environment Programme (resolution 2994 (XXVII)).

United Nations Conference on Environment and Development
(1992, Brazil)

In 1988, the Assembly expressed the view that it was highly desirable that a United Nations conference on environment and development be convened no later than 1992. It decided to consider in 1989 the question of convening such a conference (resolution 43/196). Accepting an offer by the Government of Brazil to host the Conference, the Assembly decided at its 1989 regular session that the Conference would be held in 1992 to coincide with World Environment Day on 5 June (resolution 44/228). A preparatory committee is to hold an initial organizational meeting at Headquarters in March 1990 to determine the dates of a subsequent session in Nairobi, two in Geneva and a final session at Headquarters. It is expected to draft the agenda, adopt guidelines for State reporting and prepare draft decisions for Conference consideration. The Assembly affirmed that the Conference should elaborate strategies and measures to halt and reverse the effects of environmental degradation in the context of strengthened national and international efforts to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development in all countries, and it listed the 23 objectives of the Conference.

NATURAL DISASTERS

International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction
(1990s)

In 1987, the General Assembly decided to designate the 1990s as a decade in which the international community, under United Nations auspices, would pay special attention to fostering international co-operation in natural disaster reduction (resolution 42/169). The objective of the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction is to reduce loss of life, property damage and social and economic disruption caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, windstorms, floods, landslides, volcanic eruptions, fires, insect infestations, drought and desertification. Last year, an international framework of action was adopted setting out some of the activities to be undertaken at the national level as well as within the United Nations system (resolution 44/236).

Goals of the Decade are to improve each country's capacity to mitigate the effects of natural disasters, to devise guidelines and strategies for applying existing knowledge, to foster scientific and engineering endeavours to close critical gaps in knowledge, to develop and disseminate information on and evaluate the effectiveness of measures for assessing, predicting, preventing and mitigating natural disasters through programmes of technical assistance and technology transfer, demonstration projects, education and training. Governments are called on to establish, as appropriate, national committees to help attain the desired goals. They have also been asked to keep the Secretary-General informed of their plans and of assistance that could be provided so that the United Nations might become an international centre for information exchange and the co-ordination of international efforts concerning activities in support of the Decade's goals.

The Secretary-General was asked to establish a special high-level council of internationally prominent persons to provide him with overall advice on the Decade. An expert scientific and technical committee is to develop overall programmes to be taken into account in bilateral and multilateral co-operation for the Decade.

International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction
(Second Wednesday of October)

On 22 December 1989, the General Assembly decided to designate the second Wednesday of October as an International Day for Natural Disaster Reduction (resolution 44/236).

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION

Second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination
(1983-1993)

In 1973, the General Assembly designated the 10-year period beginning on 10 December 1973 (Human Rights Day) as the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and it adopted a Programme setting forth the goals of the Decade and the measures to be taken at the national, regional and international levels to achieve them (resolution 3057 (XXVIII)).

In August 1983, at the end of the Decade, the Second World Conference to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination was held at Geneva (the first World Conference was held in 1978).

After considering the report of the Second World Conference, the Assembly noted with concern that, despite the efforts of the international community, the Decade had not attained its principal objectives and that millions of human beings continued to be victims of racism and racial discrimination. On the Conference's recommendation, the Assembly proclaimed the 10-year period beginning on 10 December 1983 as the second Decade to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, and approved the Programme of Action for the Decade. It requested the Economic and Social Council to co-ordinate the implementation of the Programme and evaluate the activities undertaken during the second Decade (resolution 38/14).

The Programme of Action calls for measures to combat racism and racial discrimination in the following areas: action to combat apartheid; education, teaching and training to create a favourable atmosphere for the eradication of racism and racial discrimination; dissemination of information and increasing the role of the mass media in combating racism and racial discrimination; measures for the promotion and protection of the human rights of minorities, indigenous peoples and migrant workers; recourse procedures for victims of racial discrimination; implementation of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination and other related international instruments; national legislation and institutions; seminars and studies; action by non-governmental organizations; and international co-operation.

At its subsequent sessions, the Assembly invited the Secretary-General to proceed with the implementation of the plan of activities that had been drawn up for the period 1985-1989. The Economic and Social Council reports annually to the Assembly on activities undertaken or contemplated for achieving the Decade's objectives, to review and appraise those activities and make suggestions and recommendations.

In 87, the Assembly approved a plan of activities submitted by the Secretary-General to be implemented during the second half of the Decade (1990-1993), and invited the international community to participate fully in implementing the plans of activities for 1985-1989 and 1990-1993 (resolution 42/47).

The plan of activities for 1990-1991 includes studies, meetings and seminars on the extent to which migrant workers' children receive education in their mother tongue; national experience in self-government for indigenous populations; the impact of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in providing guarantees of equality to minorities; legislation to combat racism and racial discrimination; community relations commissions; experience in implementing the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; and the campaign for the early independence of Namibia. In December 1988, the General Assembly invited the Secretary-General to proceed with preparations for the activities scheduled for 1990-1991 (resolution 43/91).

Activities proposed for 1992-1993 include experts' discussions on preparing teaching materials to combat racial discrimination; additional language versions of the handbook of recourse procedures for victims of discrimination; workshops on legislation to combat discrimination; an international campaign on the main obstacles to eradicating discrimination and apartheid; a study on the treatment of political prisoners and detainees in South Africa and Namibia, particularly women and children; and the extent of the dissemination of the International Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (21 March)

The International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination is observed annually on 21 March, the anniversary of the killing by South African police of some 70 Africans demonstrating peacefully against pass laws in Sharpeville, South Africa, in 1960.

Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination (Beginning on 21 March)

As part of its programme for the first Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, the General Assembly, in 1979, called for the observance by all States of a Week of Solidarity with the Peoples Struggling against Racism and Racial Discrimination, beginning on 21 March (resolution 34/24).

HUMAN RIGHTS

Human Rights Day (10 December)

In 1950, the General Assembly invited all States and interested organizations to observe 10 December, the anniversary of the Assembly's adoption in 1948 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as Human Rights Day (resolution 423 (V)).

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Last year, the Assembly adopted a resolution in which it considered that it would be appropriate to conduct a review of what had been accomplished through the United Nations human rights programmes and what remained to be done. It asked the Secretary-General to seek the views of Governments, organizations and other bodies concerned with human rights on the desirability of convening a world conference on human rights. He is to report to the Assembly at its regular 1990 session (resolution 44/156).

DECOLONIZATION

International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism (1990-2000)

In 1988, the Assembly declared 1990-2000 as the International Decade for the Eradication of Colonialism, recalling that the year 1990 would mark the thirtieth anniversary of the adoption of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (resolution 43/47).

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Last December, the Assembly endorsed the Programme of Activities in Observance of the Thirtieth Anniversary of the Declaration, as prepared by the Special Committee on decolonization, to be undertaken by the United Nations, Member States and organizations in the course of the commemorative year. The plans include a commemorative meeting of the Assembly, to be held in early October 1990, and a declaration to be prepared by the Special Committee for adoption by the Assembly. Two regional seminars, one in the Caribbean and the other in the Asia/Pacific region, are planned for 1990 and will concentrate on the special concerns of small islands that are still dependent Territories. The motto for the anniversary commemoration is "Complete decolonization: Objective 2000" (resolution 44/100).

Week of Solidarity with the Peoples of Namibia and All Other Colonial Territories, as well as those in South Africa, Fighting for Freedom, Independence and Human Rights (Beginning on 25 May)

See under SOUTHERN AFRICA, p. 00.

DRUG ABUSE

International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (26 June)

Following a recommendation of the 1987 International Conference on Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, the General Assembly, the Assembly, on 7 December 1987, expressed its determination to strengthen action and co-operation at the national, regional and international levels towards the goal of an international society free of drug abuse, and decided to observe 26 June each year as the International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (resolution 42/112).

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Last November, the eneral Assembly decided to hold a special session at Headquarters from 20 to 23 February 1990, at a high political level, to discuss the question of international co-operation against the illicit production, supply, demand, trafficking and distribution of narcotic drugs with a view to expanding the scope and increasing the effectiveness of such co-operation (resolution 44/16). The resolution was a response by Member States to an address by the President of Colombia, who proposed in the Assembly last September that such a session be convened. The Assembly set out a number of elements which might be included in a global programme of action against narcotic drugs expected to be adopted at the special session, and asked States to consider them in the preparatory work for that session. These elements include, among other things, the possible declaration of a United Nations decade against drug abuse; measures to prevent money laundering; curbing the rising demand for narcotic drugs; co-ordination of an expanded training programme for national narcotics agents; and ways of increasing resources for United Nations drug control efforts.

Last November, the Assembly decided to establish a Preparatory Committee for the special session (the Assembly's seventeenth), which met in December 1989, and earlier this month (decision 44/410).

DISABLED PERSONS

United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons (1983-1992)

In 1982, the General Assembly stated that it recognized that the International Year of Disabled Persons (1981) had contributed to the acceptance of the right of disabled persons to participate fully in the social life and development of their societies and enjoy living conditions equal to that of their fellow citizens. The Assembly also adopted the World Programme of Action concerning Disabled Persons, and proclaimed 1983-1992 the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons as a long-term plan of action, encouraging Member States to utilize this period as one of the means to implement that Programme (resolution 37/53).

In 1983, the Assembly said it recognized the desirability of continuing the United Nations Trust Fund for the International Year of Disabled Persons throughout the Decade (resolution 38/28); in 1985, the Fund was renamed the Voluntary Fund for the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons, and the Secretary-General was authorized to receive special-purpose contributions to it (resolution 40/31). The World Programme of Action, for which the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations Office at Vienna is the focal point, envisages that the Fund be used to meet requests for assistance from developing countries and organizations of disabled persons to further the implementation of the Programme.

The Assembly has invited Member States to reinforce or establish national committees or similar bodies for the Decade at the highest level, with the participation of organizations of disabled persons, to plan, co-ordinate, encourage, participate in, publicize, monitor and evaluate activities in support of the objectives of the Decade. In 1988, the Secretary-General appointed a Special Representative for the Promotion of the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons. Later that year, the Assembly endorsed measures proposed by the Secretary-General to strengthen the programmes and activities of the United Nations system and improve inter-agency co-ordination. It stressed that for the second half of the Decade, special emphasis should be placed on the equalization of opportunities for disabled persons. The Assembly's resolution annexed a list of priorities for global activities and programmes for the second half of the Decade that Member States and organizations were urged to undertake (resolution 43/98).

CRIME PREVENTION

Eighth United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (27 August - 7 September 1990, Havana)

In 1950, the General Assembly authorized the convening every five years of a United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. The seventh and most recent Congress (Milan, 1985) adopted the Milan Plan of Action for strengthening international co-operation in crime prevention and criminal justice, subsequently approved by the Assembly.

The Committee on Crime Prevention and Control is entrusted with preparing the quinquennial United Nations Congresses on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders. In November 1987, the General Assembly approved the Committee's recommended agenda for the Eighth Congress. It was to include the topics: crime prevention and criminal justice in the context of development; criminal justice policies in relation to problems of imprisonment and alternative penal measures; national and international action against organized crime and terrorist activities; prevention of delinquency, juvenile justice and protection of the young; and United Nations norms and guidelines in crime prevention and criminal justice (resolution 42/59).

The Congress is to be organized by the Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice Branch of the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. Participants will include criminologists, penologists and senior police officials, as well as experts in criminal law, human rights and rehabilitation. Cuba's offer to host the Eighth Congress at Havana has been accepted by the Assembly (resolution 44/72).

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

World Decade for Cultural Development (1988-1997)

In 1986, the General Assembly proclaimed the period 1988-1997 the World Decade for Cultural Development, to be observed under the auspices of the United Nations and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) (resolution 41/187). The idea was first proposed by the UNESCO World Conference on Cultural Policies at Mexico City in 1982, and subsequently endorsed by UNESCO.

To be achieved through voluntary efforts by States, organizations and individuals, the Decade's four main objectives are: acknowledging the cultural dimension of development; affirming and enriching cultural identities; broadening participation in culture; and promoting international cultural co-operation. The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the Director-General of UNESCO are to report biennially to the Assembly, through the Economic and Social Council, on the progress of the Decade.

The Assembly supported a recommendation for an evaluation at the mid-point of the Decade, in 1993, under United Nations and UNESCO auspices, to evaluate the implementation of the Plan of Action for the Decade (resolution 44/238).

EDUCATION

International Literacy Year (1990)

The General Assembly in 1987 proclaimed 1990 as International Literacy Year, after approving an appeal of the Director-General of UNESCO the previous year to proclaim such a year. The Assembly invited UNESCO to assume the role of lead organization in arrangements for the Year (resolution 42/104).

The Assembly emphasized that widespread illiteracy, especially in many developing countries, seriously hindered economic and social development and cultural and spiritual advancement, and observed that its eradication called for world-wide co-operation and that its complete elimination should be recognized as a priority objective of the international community. It was convinced that the elaboration of a global strategy for the eradication of illiteracy and the organization of a world-wide literacy campaign would promote deeper understanding of the problem and intensification of efforts to spread literacy and education. The Assembly also welcomed the convening of a World Conference on Education for All, scheduled for March 1990 in Thailand, under the joint sponsorship of UNESCO, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank (resolution 44/127).

THE FAMILY

International Year of the Family (1994)

In December 1989, the General Assembly proclaimed 1994 as International Year of the Family. This action was a follow-up to the Guiding Principles for Social Welfare Policies and Programmes in the Near Future, which were adopted by an Interregional Consultation on Developmental Social Welfare Policies and Programmes (Vienna, 7-15 September 1987) -- a global meeting of ministers and senior policy-makers concerned with social issues -- and endorsed by the Assembly in 1987 (resolution 42/125). The Principles had called for social welfare policies to give greater attention to the family. The main purpose of the Year, as endorsed by the Assembly, is to enhance awareness of family issues and improve national institutional capability to carry out comprehensive policies to tackle those problems considered the most serious. Protection and strengthening of emotional, financial and material support provided between family members, as well as support between related families, including care for infants and children, the elderly and the sick and disabled, are among the goals of a programme to be defined by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs. The Secretary-General was asked to prepare a draft programme on the preparations for and observance of the Year, to be submitted to the Assembly in 1990. The Commission for Social Development has been designated as the preparatory body and the Economic and Social Council as the co-ordinating body of the International Year (resolution 44/82).

INTERNATIONAL LAW

United Nations Decade of International Law (1990-1999)

Last November, the General Assembly declared the period 1990-1999 as the United Nations Decade of International Law. The main purposes of the Decade were outlined as promoting acceptance of and respect for international law principles; and promoting means and methods for the peaceful settlement of disputes between States, including resort to and full respect for the International Court of Justice; encouraging the progressive development of international law and its codification; and seeking to expand the teaching, study, dissemination and wider appreciation of international law. The Secretary-General was asked to seek the views of Member States, international bodies and non-governmental organizations in the field on the programme for the Decade, including the possibility of holding a third international peace conference or other conference at the end of the Decade (resolution 44/23).

International Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the
Draft Convention on the Liability of Operators of
Transport Terminals in International Trade
(2-19 April 1991, Vienna)

On the recommendations of the United Nations Commission on International Trade Law (UNCITRAL), the General Assembly decided last December to convene in Vienna in April 1991 an international conference of plenipotentiaries to conclude, on the basis of a draft text approved by the Commission, a Convention on the Liability of Operators of Transport Terminals in International Trade (resolution 44/33).

OTHER SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

International Day of Peace
(Third Tuesday of September)

In 1981, the General Assembly declared that the third Tuesday of September, the opening day of the regular session of the General Assembly each year, "shall be officially dedicated and observed as the International Day of Peace and shall be devoted to commemorating and strengthening the ideals of peace both within and among all nations and peoples" (resolution 36/67).

World Habitat Day
(First Monday of October)

Acting on a recommendation of the Commission on Human Settlements, the Assembly, in 1985, designated the first Monday of October of every year as World Habitat Day. The first observance of the Day, in 1986, marked the tenth anniversary year of the first international conference on the subject -- HABITAT: United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (May/June 1976, Vancouver, Canada) (resolution 40/202 A).

World Food Day
(16 October)

The aim of World Food Day, proclaimed in 1979 by the Conference of the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), is to heighten public awareness of the world food problem and strengthen solidarity in the struggle against hunger, malnutrition and poverty. In 1980, the General Assembly endorsed observance of the Day in consideration of the fact that "food is a requisite for human survival and well-being and a fundamental human necessity" (resolution 35/70).

United Nations Day
(24 October)

The anniversary of the entry into force of the United Nations Charter -- 24 October 1945 -- has been celebrated as United Nations Day since 1948. It has traditionally been marked throughout the world by meetings, discussions and exhibits on the achievements and goals of the Organization. In 1971, the Assembly recommended that it should be observed as a public holiday by United Nations Member States (resolution 2782 (XXVI)).

International Week of Science and Peace
(Week of 11 November)

In 1988, the Assembly proclaimed an International Week of Science and Peace, to be celebrated each year during the week in which 11 November falls, as a special week of action devoted to "Science and peace", on order to generate and increase public interest in this topic. The date was chosen to retain the date of the first International Week of Scientists for Peace (10-16 November 1986). Institutions of advanced studies, scientific academies, professional associations and individuals were urged to hold during that week lectures, seminars, special debates and other activities conducive to the study and dissemination of information on the links between progress in science and technology and the maintenance of peace and security (resolution 43/61).

World AIDS Day
(1 December)

In 1988, the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), the agency whose leadership is recognized in the global direction and co-ordination of AIDS prevention, control, research and education, announced that WHO had declared 1 December 1988 as World AIDS Day, an international day of awareness and education about AIDS. The General Assembly, in October 1988, asked the Secretary-General to ensure, in close co-operation with the Director-General of WHO and through appropriate mechanisms, a co-ordinated response by the United Nations system to the AIDS pandemic (resolution 43/15).

International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development
(5 December)

In 1985, on a suggestion by the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme, the General Assembly invited Governments to observe, annually on 5 December, the International Volunteer Day for Economic and Social Development, commemorating -- 15 years after the creation of the United Nations Volunteers programme -- the role of voluntarism in the international development movement. It urged them to take measures to heighten awareness of the important contribution of volunteer service, thereby stimulating more people to offer their services (resolution 40/212).

Other International Days

Other international days observed throughout the United Nations system include:

International Women's Day (8 March), World Meteorological Day (23 March), World Health Day (7 April), World Telecommunication Day (17 May), World No-Tobacco Day (31 May), International Literacy Day (8 September), World Maritime Day (during the last week in September), Universal Children's Day (varies; traditionally first Monday of October), World Post Day (9 October) and World Development Information Day (24 October).

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